

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Downtown Vision & Action Plan Consultant Services

Issued By: Downtown Everett Association

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Submit by Email to: Scott Hulme at scott@downtowneverettwa.org

Introduction

The Downtown Everett Association (DEA) is seeking a creative consultant to develop a Vision and Action Plan. The plan will guide the physical and cultural development and revitalization efforts within roughly 40 blocks in Downtown Everett. This plan will build on downtown's strengths while incorporating new ideas, creating a vision for the future and an achievable roadmap for the next 10 years.

As a downtown management organization, DEA focuses on enhancing the district through clean and safe services, marketing, business recruitment, and placemaking. DEA is a national and Washington State accredited Main Street organization, emphasizing economic development through enhancing our historic assets. With deep roots in the community, DEA aims for a plan that reflects its ongoing commitment to advance a vibrant and thriving downtown.

Over the past two decades, several [City of Everett \(City\) led plans](#) have shaped Downtown's growth, including [Everett Downtown Plan](#) (2006) and [Metro Everett](#) (2018, amended 2020). The DEA is launching the Vision and Action Plan to build directly on this foundation. This plan complements and activates existing City planning efforts delivering a clear 10-year Vision for Downtown Everett, underpinned by a prioritized five-year Strategic Action Plan.

The City of Everett is located approximately 25 miles north of Seattle and is the seventh most populated city in the state of Washington. Everett's downtown is a vibrant urban core rich with history and framed by a stunning natural landscape. Situated on a peninsula bordered by the Snohomish River and Port Gardner Bay, and bisected by I-5, it balances accessibility with scenic beauty. The area is a patchwork of historic Prohibition-era architecture, classic storefronts, and modern developments that reflect its evolution as the seat of Snohomish County.

This unique character is defined by cultural landmarks like Schack Art Center, The Village Theater, APEX Everett, and New Everett Theater. It also features the global headquarters of Funko, attracting international visitors, and a mix of independent restaurants, boutique retail, and community events. The presence of Angel Of The Winds Arena further cements downtown's reputation as a vibrant center for creativity and cultural connection.

At the same time, Downtown Everett faces several impediments to realizing its full potential. Obvious opportunities include connecting various districts, updating streetscapes, opportunities for redevelopment, and improving public spaces. As Everett and Snohomish County prepare for significant growth, including new housing, a light rail station, a new outdoor events and sports

stadium, this revitalization plan must address current issues and forward-looking opportunities while honoring the district's heritage.

To meet this moment, DEA seeks a plan that goes beyond a standard 'wish list' of improvements. We require a vital readiness strategy that demonstrates how downtown will be strategically positioned, ensuring that physical enhancements and economic strategies are resilient –leveraging growth and change. This plan will focus on economic development, public realm, transportation, growth, equity, and land use, while considering themes outlined in the DEA's Strategic Plan and addressing other important issues to the community. It's crucial to find a consultant who can offer innovative solutions while highlighting community involvement. We envision a plan that prioritizes the physical development of downtown, guides its future, and enables DEA and the City to address areas of improvement that benefit downtown now and in the future.

We seek a consultant who will coordinate with DEA and City staff at key milestones to provide strategic input and ensure project alignment. A steering committee, composed of representatives from both DEA and the City, will be involved throughout the process to guide the project's direction. The selected consultant must understand the community and demonstrate the ability to balance the views of local businesses, property owners, cultural organizations, and residents.

The plan should provide:

- A 10-year vision supported by a five-year action plan for downtown's physical development and revitalization.
- A collaborative community resource designed to support stakeholder confidence and catalyze downtown investment by identifying and accelerating high-priority initiatives.
- A project list that includes long-term catalyst projects for systemic growth and accelerated 'early wins' to build immediate momentum, paired with viable funding models.
- Engagement with the community to gather input.
- Other important topics that arise during the process to make sure the plan remains adaptable.

Plan Objectives

The Vision and Action Plan will:

- Review and address the themes and barriers identified in the DEA's Strategic Plan.
- Define an ambitious, long-term vision for Downtown Everett's future that reflects the values of the DEA, the City, and the community while positioning downtown as a distinctive regional destination and urban center.
- Engage the community and stakeholders to build a unified vision that promotes collaboration.
- Identify catalytic projects, redevelopment opportunities, and strategic investments that can elevate Downtown Everett's identity, economic competitiveness, and urban experience over the long term.

- Introduce innovative, forward-thinking strategies and industry best practices informed by leading downtowns and urban districts nationally and internationally, positioning Downtown Everett to capitalize on its unique assets and identity.
- Evaluate prior studies and existing conditions to identify opportunities for improving transportation, connectivity, and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, transit users, and other multimodal transportation systems.
- Support arts, culture, entertainment, recreation, and public realm improvements that enhance quality of life and strengthen downtown as a vibrant destination for businesses, residents, and visitors.
- Preserve and celebrate downtown's historic character while encouraging bold, creative, and innovative growth that differentiates Everett from surrounding communities and supports long-term economic vitality.
- Plan by anticipating challenges and creating an adaptable downtown.
- Develop an actionable implementation strategy with clear priorities, measurable goals, and tools for tracking progress over time, with achievable outcomes.
- Identify potential local, regional, state, federal, and private funding opportunities and partnerships to support implementation of the plan.

Scope of Work

The Vision and Action Plan process will include, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

1. Research & Analysis
 - a. Review past DEA and City plans, surveys, market analysis, research, and projects.
 - b. Assess the effectiveness of existing plans and City policies.
 - c. Conduct necessary analysis and research to create recommendations based on downtown's current and projected conditions.
2. Community Outreach and Engagement
 - a. DEA will collaborate with the consultant to determine the scope of outreach to capture community input. Together, they will develop a plan that reflects downtown's vision and identity while encouraging ownership among DEA and the City.
 - b. Create and implement an inclusive public engagement strategy that encourages participation from diverse and relevant groups, including residents, property owners, and business owners.
 - c. Offer opportunities for public input, including traditional methods like surveys and stakeholder groups, as well as innovative avenues.
3. Vision & Goals Identification
 - a. Work closely with DEA, the City, and the public to create a vision that promotes Downtown Everett and defines clear roles and actionable tasks for each party.
 - b. Establish a vision that aligns with DEA's mission and promotes downtown as a destination and cultural hub in Snohomish County, Washington, and nationally.
 - c. Align the plan's themes and goals with other related planning and development efforts for Downtown and the City.

- d. Address key issues, including growth, housing, economic development, parking, public spaces, art, historic preservation, and transportation.
 - e. Support a vibrant downtown that enhances residents' lives and prioritizes businesses and visitors.
 - f. Develop a plan for downtown's physical development, including infrastructure and street hierarchy identification, potential district designations, and branding for districts (such as arts, dining, and retail).
 - g. Identify streetscape elements to add or improve (i.e. trash cans, tree wells, and lighting).
 - h. Ensure connectivity to Everett's various districts (Port of Everett, Everett Station District, Riverside, Bayside, Port Gardner, etc.).
 - i. The plan should be forward-thinking, adaptable, and able to meet future challenges like technological changes, demographic shifts, and economic fluctuations.
 - j. Establish implementable, measurable goals based on the plan's vision that enable the DEA, City, and both sectors to track progress and ensure accountability.
4. Draft Plan Development and Implementation Framework
- a. Provide a comprehensive implementation matrix for each vision and goal, including estimated costs, timeframes, and key partners. This must include "early win" actions and a data-driven justification for high-priority catalyst projects.
 - b. Develop a specific, 10-year actionable roadmap (short, mid, and long-term) that defines roles and responsibilities for both the DEA and the City. This roadmap should include measurable performance metrics and identify areas requiring further study.
 - c. Develop a financial strategy for the prioritized projects, including capital cost estimates and a diversified funding strategy such as grants, public-private partnerships, and municipal funds.
 - d. Facilitate regular reviews with the steering committee and City staff to ensure all recommendations are technically viable, aligned with municipal frameworks, and build community consensus.
5. Mapping and Visualization
- a. Follow design best practices and principles and create comprehensive visual tools (infographics, maps, pictures, charts, etc.) to aid in effective information sharing and decision-making.
 - b. Use maps, visual aids, and an engaging public-facing summary such as a brief illustrated handout, or short video to clearly show implementation locations, convey the plan's vision, and inspire excitement for Downtown Everett's future.
6. Final Plan Production
- a. Submit a complete draft of the Vision and Action Plan to the DEA and Steering Committee for review. Manage the subsequent feedback and revision process to ensure all stakeholder comments are addressed before finalization.
 - b. Produce the final Vision and Action Plan document, including an executive summary and appendices, in both digital (PDF) and one physical copy. Provide a comprehensive package of all associated data, maps, and visualization materials for future use.

7. Consultant Project Management

The consultant will manage the project through all phases, including:

- a. Build, publish and update the project plan,
- b. Provide regular project updates,
- c. Manage the project budget,
- d. Identify project roadblocks and work with the DEA to define and implement solutions to remove them,
- e. Manage the project change management process.

Proposal Submission Criteria and Selection Process

Each submission will be evaluated by a selection committee comprised of DEA representatives and City staff, who will score proposals based on technical approach, project team experience, public engagement strategy, financial and implementation expertise, and the cost proposal and value. This committee will prioritize teams that show a strong track record in managing revitalization plans and can offer data-driven justifications for "catalyst" projects.

1. A single-page cover letter

A single-page cover letter introducing the team and identifying the primary point of contact.

2. Main proposals should include the following information:

- a. Identification of project personnel who will be responsible for the work, identification of the project personnel who will be performing the work.
- b. The proposal should include information on the Consultant's unique qualifications and/or capabilities.
- c. The proposal should include descriptions of similar projects, including client contact information, project budget, completion date, and key staff participants.
- d. The proposal should include a proposed budget or multiple budget scenarios based upon option packages for approaching this project within the budgeted amount (\$100,000 - \$125,000). Total Fee and fee breakdown per activity should be included.
- e. The proposal should include the project timeline, including timelines for specific tasks as proposed by the firm.
- f. The proposal should include a plan for public engagement through the process.

3. Addenda for the main proposal should include the following:

- a. Resumes for key employees of the Consultant, as well as subcontractors.
- b. Links to examples of similar projects.
- c. References from prior clients including contact information and brief descriptions for prior clients (not to exceed one page each).

4. Proposal Evaluation and Selection

The DEA will evaluate proposals based on a scoring system to identify the team best qualified to meet the project objectives.

- a. Technical Approach and Methodology (30%)
 - i. Understanding of the unique geographic and historic context of the 40-block Downtown Improvement District.
 - ii. The ability to address upcoming regional shifts like a new light rail station and outdoor events stadium in Downtown Everett.
- b. Project Team Experience and Qualifications (25%)
 - i. Proven track record of the firm in managing revitalization plans for districts of similar scale.
 - ii. Experience working effectively with downtown organizations, municipal departments and diverse stakeholder groups.
 - iii. Quality of past work on comparable catalyst urban design projects and physical streetscape enhancements.
- c. Public Engagement Strategy (20%)
 - i. Creativity and inclusivity of the proposed outreach methods to capture input from residents, property owners, and business owners.
 - ii. Ability to utilize both traditional surveys and innovative digital tools to encourage broad community ownership.
- d. Implementation Expertise (15%)
 - i. Demonstrated proficiency in creating financial models and identifying diverse capital funding streams.
 - ii. Ability to provide data-driven justifications for project prioritization and "catalyst" designations.
- e. Cost Proposal and Value (10%)
 - i. The clarity and transparency of the itemized project budget.
 - ii. The overall value of the proposed services relative to the depth of research and quality of deliverables.

Timeline

Activity	Date
RFP Post	May 19, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	June 19, 2026, 5:00 PM PST
Anticipated Consultant Selection	July 2026
Anticipated Project Start Date	Summer 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

How should the final proposal be submitted?

Please submit electronically, in PDF format to scott@downtowneverettwa.org.

Submit questions to:

Scott Hulme, Business Development Manager, at scott@downtowneverettwa.org

What level of collaboration is expected with the City?

DEA will coordinate with City staff and expects regular communication between both consultant teams, DEA, and City staff to align outreach and messaging.

How does this plan differ from the 2018 Metro Everett plan?

While Metro Everett provided a broad regulatory framework, this Vision and Action Plan is intended to be a "vital readiness strategy." It focuses specifically on physical streetscape vibrancy, placemaking, and concrete implementation steps to prepare for major regional developments.

What specific "regional catalysts" should the proposal address?

The proposal must demonstrate how the consultant will help the City leverage two major upcoming projects: the Everett Link Extension (Light Rail) and the new multi-purpose outdoor stadium projected for 2027.

What's the balance between technical analysis and public engagement?

DEA envisions a light technical analysis phase focused on synthesizing existing studies and identifying key opportunities or gaps. The emphasis should be on community and stakeholder engagement along with best practices to shape the downtown vision and priorities.

What existing documents should be reviewed?

The DEA 2025 Strategic Plan, Everett Downtown Plan (2006), Metro Everett (2018, amended 2020), Everett 2044 Comprehensive Plan, Everett Link Extension Draft EIS (2026), Connecting Everett in 2045 (Everett Transit Long Range Plan), Snohomish County Light Rail Communities (LRC) Zone Amendments, Port of Everett: Waterfront Place Central Master Plan, Everett Station District Alliance (ESDA) Vision, to name a few.

How does DEA define community buy-in?

The plan should be shaped by authentic public engagement so that residents and stakeholders feel their voices were heard and considered. DEA wants a plan that the community sees as its own and unique to addressing Downtown Everett's assets and opportunities.

Are creative or non-traditional engagement tools or ideas welcome?

Yes. DEA is open to creative approaches that make engagement more accessible for the public.

What is the expected timeline for this project?

DEA anticipates coordination with the City's outreach schedule. Public engagement components should begin in the third quarter of 2026. The DEA will look to the chosen consultant for guidance on the duration of the project but expects approximately 9 months.

What current issues or challenges should the plan consider?

- *Parking supply; mobility.*
- *Public perception of downtown safety and vibrancy.*
- *Need to rebuild foot traffic post-pandemic.*
- *Ensuring downtown remains the region's central hub for activity and investment.*
- *Coordination with nearby institutions and neighborhoods.*
- *Connectivity and growth.*

Should the plan make specific policy or zoning recommendations, or focus on strategic programming?

The final report should have emphasis on strategic planning and programming.

What is the DEA's expectation of the consultant team?

Deliver a process that emphasizes engagement, coordination, and actionable outcomes. DEA values creativity, collaboration, and clarity.

How do you define an "accessible" final report?

DEA does not want this report to sit on a shelf. This report will be read, referenced, and utilized by a variety of stakeholders; building owners, business owners, government officials, non-profit partners, residents, etc., thus the report should have a variety of components that can relate to each of these groups. DEA intends to utilize this plan as a guiding document for priorities and action.